digital
NATIVES

PROJECT NAME

digital NATIVES

FUNDING REQUEST TO CPB

Training & Content Development Project: $185,000
Feature Documentary Project: $120,000

PLATFORM

Digital, Broadcast, Multimedia

PROPOSED LENGTH OF COMPLETED PROJECT

Feature length documentary; Digital short form series, extensive social media, podcast and audio content as well as multimedia content aggregation.

STATION RELATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

We are in the process of presenting this proposal to a number of potential partners and funding sources.

We have shared this narrative thus far to *Indian Country Today*, Vision Maker Media and Oregon Public Broadcasting.

Partners could be involved in a number of different ways - from national CPB funded entities, station partnership with a large statewide multiplatform Public Media station, a public university school of Journalism and Communication, on to smaller independent public media outlets and independent trainers, content producers and creators.

Built into the proposal is also the opportunity for citizen content producers to be mentored by journalists, filmmakers, photojournalists, etc. This could lead to a number of less comprehensive partnerships with broader public media, commercial media, print and other legacy outlets, as well as independents. There is also extensive opportunity to engage other Tribal media, museums, libraries and other Indigenous arts and cultural institutions.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

In Public Media, we have been talking about the explosion of the smartphone, social media, broadband access, the democratization of content creation, and a host of related topics since the time when an iPhone came with 4GB of storage.

A lot has changed in 15 years, and much of what was once theory is coming to bear. Today it finally feels like we are in the explosion of content and opportunity that was predicted. But how we as Public Media begin to harness the opportunities presented is still evolving.

We see our faces, Indigenous people from across the country and world, on Youtube, TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram. Independent creators of all kinds are building audiences, making connections, and in some cases monetizing their work. Native people are going viral, as Starlink satellites beam broadband to places that never had access.

If now is the time to ramp up investment in Indigenous people in Public Media - in social media - in all media... how do we build a pipeline, spark a movement, and create the connections needed to truly include more Indigenous voices in the work we do?

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INTRODUCTION & ENVIRONMENTAL OUTLOOK

For many people, the idea of "Home" is complicated. For Warm Springs & Wasco People it leads to the Columbia River and its Tributaries. For Paiute People it was a vast swath of lands in Eastern & Southeastern Oregon, Eastern California, Nevada, & Utah. For those living today, the real, defacto Home is the Warm Springs Reservation. In 1986, KWSO was founded to serve as a community connector for these people.

In this new millennium, KWSO has worked hard to do more than just adapt to survive. We have embraced the new media landscape in order to thrive. In a community like ours, it's not hard to realize that the core of "who we are" and "what we do" is more than a broadcast tower. We are more than an RF signal chain, or a satellite uplink. What we do is the community work - the gathering of ideas, consensus and opposition. We are here to convene, empower and serve - every bit as much as we are here to inform, educate and inspire.

In 2021, we find ourselves in Warm Springs living in the heart of Oregon - certainly geographically, but also in a host of other ways. As the COVID-19 pandemic rages, as Portland, our state's largest city, became the epicenter of protests - largely aimed at racial equity. It is harder than ever for people to find news and information they trust. As public media, we strive to help our people to feel not only informed, but also connected.

Like many places today, the reality is our state is deeply politically divided. More and more - it seems culturally divided. Of Oregon's 36 counties, 26 are solidly Republican. 10 are Democrat leaning, largely in our urban areas. Our own state capitol in Salem was stormed by protestors in December, perhaps prestaging the events of January 6th in Washington DC. We sit in a complicated place, at a complicated time.

In the best of times, it is well established that our rural communities are underserved by the media. This problem is perhaps even more obvious in our Reservations and other communities of color. The work that this proposal sets out to do is a synthesis of this need, KWSO's position as an established and forward looking leader in new media, and the work we have already done in our *Coming Home* project.

In all aspects of public life in Warm Springs, we know that the best solutions are those that come from within. Whether it be using indigenous knowledge to tackle a community problem, looking to elders for the wisdom and experience they hold, or grassroots fundraising to address local needs. This type of thinking is so engrained in who we are and what we do, that we sometimes have to remember to stop and appreciate it. We just do it.

BUILDING ON COMING HOME

Over this past year, KWSO has worked as a part of CPB's *Coming Home* project to bring public media storytelling skills to our community members. Not only because it is a great opportunity, but because we've long believed this kind of engagement is at the core of our path forward.

Looking across the media landscape it's not easy to find a real look inside today's Reservations. The stories we do find are told from the outside in. Sometimes they are earnest attempts to shed light on culture, or to take a hard look at the challenges we face. Rarely do they capture an authentic look at our real lives, and what this place we call "Home" means to us. Rarest of all are stories told by our people themselves.

We believe the right people to tell the story of Warm Springs, and all our Reservations, are already here. Our role in producing these stories will be three fold - *convening*, hosting a community focus group on what this project can be, and listening to the people who want to engage in it; *training*, in partnership with professional Documentary filmmakers and producers to help these people to build the skills to take the lead on telling their own stories and increase their community's capacity to do so, and *production support and mentoring*, to ensure there is professional guidance and the technical skills necessary to see the stories to completion and beyond.

We believe that the potential of our project - collaborations between Public Media stations, local documentary filmmakers and trainers, and the people who call "The Rez" home, is sustainable and replicable across Indian Country. We hope that our proof of concept and pilot can be the start of something bigger. With this proposal, we intend to lay out how to engage a larger Indigenous community, and build a network of stories and storytellers across the region.

digital NATIVES TRAINING PROJECT

As we have built out and executed our pilot project here in Warm Springs, it has become clear to us that the next logical step is to build something bigger - refine what we've learned - and create an opportunity that includes our fellow Indigenous people from around the state, and perhaps larger region.

The opportunities presented to us by the exponential growth of smartphone usage in rural areas, along with the rapid growth of social media, the democratization of content creation and the intertwined shift in media consumption are hard to overstate. For those of us who have been championing community radio and television, citizen journalism, localized media training and advocacy for a long time - the technological barriers to entry have never been less. In many ways, it feels like the "Eiffel Tower moment" for creating the possibilities we've dreamt of.

The structure of this project, and the larger vision for the work we aspire to create looks as follows:

Convening

The first and most valuable aspect of the work we have done with ***Coming Home*** was to bring people together in a discussion of media today, how we use it, how it represents us, what we would like to see happen in the world we can influence, and what that future looks like for us.

We begin broadly, hosting community groups focused on what this project can be, and listening to the people who want to engage in it. This feeds our recruitment for further participation in training and content creation, as well as broadens our outreach to others who may not have attended.

In addition, this work helps us to identify both storytellers and potential story ideas and subjects. Across all age groups and demographics of our focus groups, the thinking and suggestions have been varied and rich. We believe expanding this network to more Indigenous communities will give us even more of an understanding of the experiences and circumstances that

A sampling of some of the themes we have identified in ***Coming Home*** include:

Change, Economy, Youth, Education, Climate Change,
Water, Identity, Plants & The Natural World

In our experience so far, we have also learned that from the outset there is the potential to color this work as "over serious" or only about the difficult or sad or unjust aspects of life. In our convening we plan to work to broaden the scope, through content examples that strike a range of tones. Humor, satire, memes, and more lighthearted points of view will always have a place in our work and what we hope to achieve.

Training

In our initial pilot project, we were able to train a modest number of 12 people in Warm Springs. Though our numbers were small in order to accommodate appropriate social distancing, the opportunity to learn together and in-person was both valuable and inspiring.

We were able to have a range of folks - from elders to youth - as well as reach individuals from a number of career backgrounds: arts and culture, healthcare, youth development, media, public relations, fund development, politics and community organizing.

As is often the case in communities like ours, these people all wear many hats. Their newfound skills, abilities, and inspiration have the potential to positively affect many organizations and groups - formal and informal.

We would like to open up a similar training opportunity to groups from tribes around the state and perhaps the greater region. These trainings will include all aspects of video production - pre-production and planning, storyboarding, shoot planning and technique, editing and post production.

There will be technical and hands-on aspects to the training, using equipment from smart phones, to DLSR and mirrorless prosumer equipment to professional audio and production cameras.

The overall framework for the training curriculum is outlined on our training blog at KWSO (https://kwso.org/category/coming-home). This was developed in response to the limitations Covid-19 placed on our initial efforts, but it continues to be an open resource we believe we can grow and expand on.

An area we would like to grow and expand on within the training is material on digital and social platforms, and how one can build a channel, as well as an audience. Another area that we would like to focus on is audio production, and how a podcast can be structured and produced. Additionally, we would like to dive into how to work with existing content producers and legacy media collaboratively. From how to "pitch" to how to work together - and how this can have an impact on the storytelling work we do.

In addition to the invaluable in-person training, we have all learned during Covid-19 the power of remote connection. We would like to put this experience to work in the training, and bring in subject matter expertise we might not otherwise be able to. This would include speakers on content areas like data journalism, photojournalism, podcasters, and other Indigneous content creators from around the world.

Many of our participants are involved with multiple organizations - such as local and statewide politics, Tribal government, arts and museum institutions, civic groups, and other grassroots concerns. Leveraging their new storytelling abilities for the benefit of the many roles they serve is a crucial part of our success.

For this project, we envision as many as 5 regional training sessions, with groups of up to 20 or more participants per group. This could mean as many as 100 individuals trained.

Mentoring

Another aspect of our learning from our pilot project is the need for on-going mentorship for our trainees. We believe we can pair a select group of trainees with a slate of professional, Indigenous and non-Indigenous storytellers, filmmakers, photojournalists and journalists from around the region in an effort to expand on the knowledge base they have built in our program.

In addition, we can build stronger relationships between our Indigenous storytellers and those in more established positions in media. We believe a portion of our overall training group could participate in this aspect of the program, with our role focusing largely on mentor recruitment, setting the initial parameters of these relationships, and some limited mentor/mentee support.

Our goal here is not only to keep our group of participants engaged in their path towards producing, but also learning the ins-and-outs of how to engage with media professionals, pitch story ideas and opportunities for collaboration, and overall have a better connection to media and how it can serve their communities.

Content Creation

The areas of potential content the project could produce are numerous, and we are consciously open to the ideas and areas of interest of our training participants and their communities.

We do know we want the core content of our project to be a series of short subject documentaries, which will be curated into a series we tentatively call *digital NATIVES*.

We anticipate the production workflows we have already established in our *Coming Home* project are the basis for how we will structure each of these projects. They will be largely first person, non voice over, with an intimate and authentic and personal feel.

We will employ professional trainers and documentary filmmakers as technical assistance and collaborators for our participants. The roles a participant can take on a production can be varied, and suited to their interest and skill level. Whether they are the director, producer, writer or editor - the participants will be the largest driving force behind the work.

The final edits of each documentary short will be done in collaboration with our participant storytellers, but produced with an eye for a cohesive and compelling overall series.

Place Based Storytelling & Content Aggregation

An important factor in Indigenous life is sense of place, and the importance of the land and where we are from. Though many of us have been historically displaced from our traditional lands, we have worked to maintain our stories, our collective memory, and the importance of who we are and where we are from. In many cases, we have built and deepened our connections to the home that is the Reservation.

Our project proposes to aggregate content created in a place-based way, through the use of mapping. What are the stories happening in Burns Paiute country? What issues face the community in Yakima. The current lines and borders of today's map do not accurately reflect the web of relationships, shared cultures, and mutual interests we find naturally in our culture.

In aggregating content - both what we create in our project and beyond - and many of the existing Indigenous stories and storytellers in this way, we are opening up the boundaries of what is possible. Our goal is more than a single Youtube channel or suite of branded social media. We want to elevate, amplify and ignite a movement of place-based storytelling for our people. It is part curation, part data journalism, and largely another aspect of simple convening.

No one documentary, television program, podcast, Youtube channel or Tik Tok video is going to change the world - nor will it change even our small corner of it. We know that - maybe better than most. Our idea is to plant the seeds to grow hundreds of stories, and feed and water the ones that are already out there. We know we alone don't have the capacity to be the only ones championing these ideas, but the reality is we are not alone - even in this nascent period. Our plan is open, collaborative, and one of the primary purposes of this project , and the work we do around it, is to invite others into the conversation.
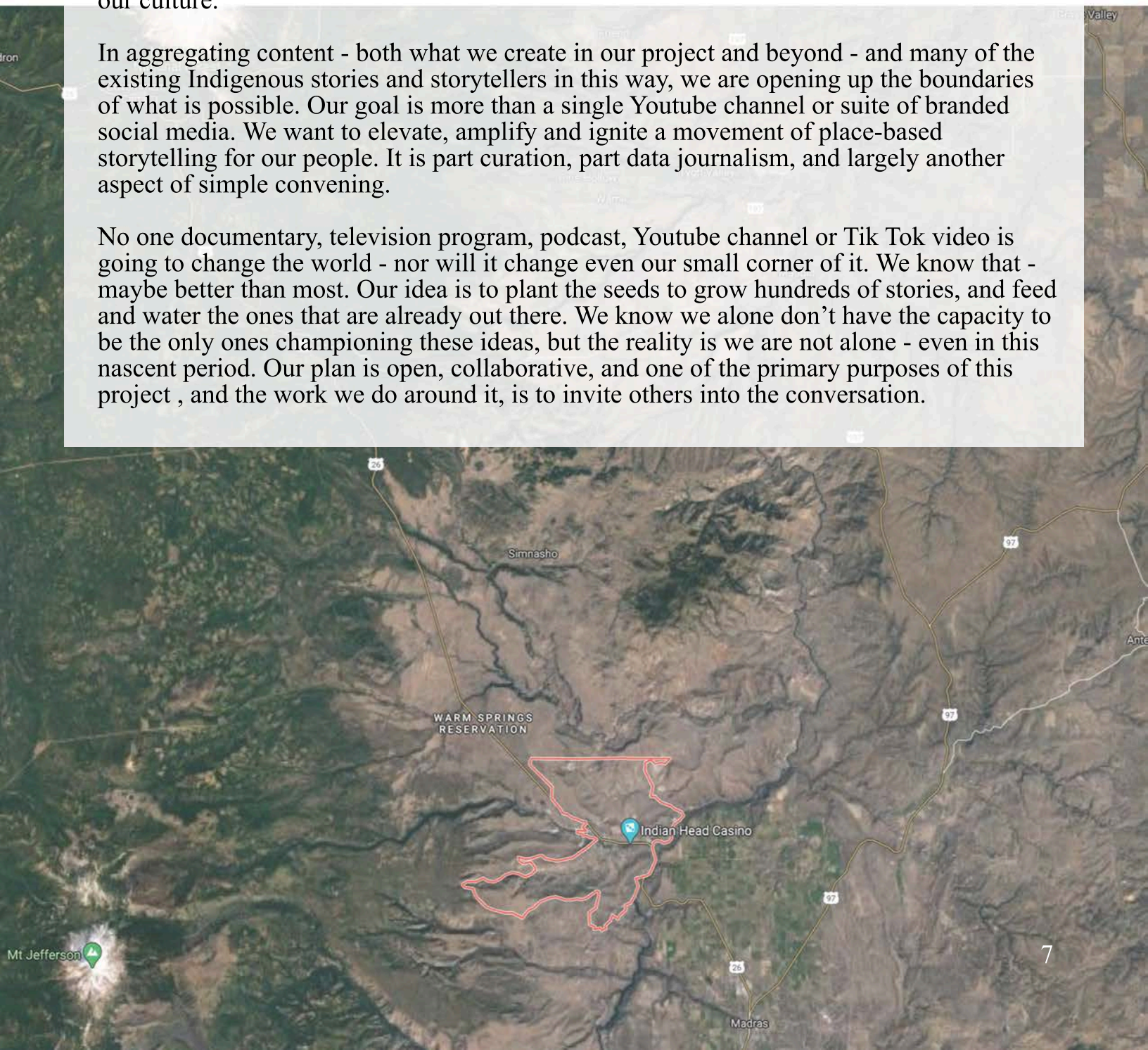
TARGET TRAINING AUDIENCE

As we've laid out in this proposal so far, Indigenous community members wear many hats. A question that we have thought long and hard about is "Who is this for?" but also how can we design what we do to be a strong, enduring added value to their lives and work, professionally and personally. With that in mind, some of our core participant groups include:

Working Professionals

Many of the participants in our pilot training project were working individuals, for whom such areas as Marketing and Communication, Arts and Culture, Youth Development, Health and Wellness, Nonprofit Management and Advocacy, Tribal and other Governance and a host of other important topics are part and parcel to their every day line of work.

While communicating with the community and the world beyond is an important aspect of the work they do, they have not had access to this type of training that can be transformative, both personally and professionally. Their goal is not become full time content producers, but to learn how to integrate that work into fulfilling the missions they are already in pursuit of.

In working with this group so far, we have learned that the initial barriers to entry seem steep, but the payoff is a new outlook and substantial possibility.

Youth & Young Adults

Youth who live in our rural communities often struggle to find a way to find meaningful work that allows them to live here, as well as feel they are making a meaningful contribution.

Whether these youth be post high school, actively pursuing college, or returning to the community after college, this is a ripe time to invest energy into shaping a hopeful vision for the future. This group are the true "digital natives" for whom mobile video, storytelling and social media are seamlessly integrated into their world view.

We believe that this group is key to the success of our project, and the work we do will perhaps have the greatest impact on them. Using technology and digital connectivity as a foundation, a number of opportunities, including career paths, become possible.

Elder & Youth Collaboration

Engaging the elders of our communities in this work is important for a number of reasons, both culturally and practically. Many of these individuals are the decision makers, culture bearers, and most valued storytellers in our communities.

While for some of our older folks, reading a proposal like this might seem like a foreign language, we believe there is opportunity for our youth and young adults to partner with their elders and create content collaborations that might not otherwise be possible. In fact, our elders are adopting digital and social media creation and consumption at a rapid pace.

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DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

The way we consider distribution of any project we create today is different than it was 20 years ago - and in many cases 20 months ago. In many ways that is the driving force behind this potentially unconventional digital first initiative.

Here are some examples of social media content that has helped us to shape our thinking:

In 2015, Samuel Johns, an Athabaskan man living in Anchorage, Alaska founded the Forget Me Nots Facebook group. The goal was simple - to reconnect homeless Alaska Native people living in Anchorage with family and friends, often in villages and outlying communities. Some may want to let their families know that they are "OK", some may make a request for some of their traditional foods, some may even ask if they can get help back to their home. Through grassroots fundraising, they collect airline miles to make some of these trips possible. Today, this group has 24,000 members and continues to do this work. In 2019, a feature length documentary about the project and Johns was completed.

Youtuber @patrickisanavajo, who has been vlogging from his home in Utah for several years has begun to build a following in recent months, with a shift towards social media reaction videos that relate specifically to Native humor. Though he joined Youtube in 2006, in the past several months he has risen to 100,000 followers and 5,141,783 views. While that growth is the result of his humor, personality, and the hard work he puts into his content - we also believe it's emblematic of what is possible in the moment we are in today. In reality, creators like Patrick aren't waiting for traditional media to find them or support them, nor should they. But we have to ask - how can we support the next up-and-comer, how can we foster more diverse perspectives and types of content regardless of the platform.

In late 2020, a Native TikTok-er in Idaho took social media by storm with a simple, inspiring video. Nathan Apodaca's truck broke down on the way to work, and he decided to take his skateboard, a bottle of cran-raspberry juice, and a song by Fleetwood Mac. The song "Dreams" - which came out in 1977 - raced back up the charts. Is all this a convenient anomaly? Yeah, maybe. The reasons a simple post like this goes viral are complicated, and not all stories like this are so positive. But, we ask ourselves "what are we doing to learn from this positive example. How can we take these same tools, all of which are now in grasp, and figure out how to help our people and elevate our stories.

While these examples could be written off as "memes" or social media flashes in the pan, to us they show the power of how harnessing a digital social media platform in the right way can lead to bigger things. We are encouraged by how we can harness this momentum in other ways, and encourage our participants to imagine their own potential to tell stories and be heard by an audience that may have felt invisible before.

Here are some of the platforms we will use for digital content distribution - at least as we see it today:

Youtube & Social Media

We plan to start a Youtube channel to host our content, which will initially be produced in partnership with our citizen trainee group. These videos will hang together as a series, though the subject matter, points of view, and voices will be diverse and wide ranging. We realize that our initial training will not create fully formed, independent filmmakers ready to navigate all aspects of production, content and branding guidelines and editorial standards.

Our initial goal is to post a series of 10-15 fully realized mini documentaries to create a complete series. Each of these will be produced in collaboration with our training group - serving in a flexible set of roles - from Director, Producer, or even central subject of the video.

Social media accounts branded for the project can be established, and initially curated by the project administrative team. As we progress, these accounts can be shared on a week-by-week basis with our participants and partners, to add multiple perspectives and rich content from numerous points of view.

As we look at the long range intentions of a project like this, it is less about KWSO or even larger partners than it is about content and the community of storytellers we want to build. An audience built on the internet doesn't need to be filtered through a broadcaster in order to consume, engage and share content.

Beyond our Youtube channel, we don't want to be too prescriptive about the potential platforms the work created by our cohorts could encompass. There could also be podcasts, data journalism projects, narrative fiction shorts or even TikTok channels that emerge from the work we do.

Broadcast Ready Shorts

We believe that much of the short form documentary content our project will produce for Youtube can find other homes in the Public Media content landscape. Whether that be World Channel, NewsHour, Indian Country Today, or more local network's broadcast and digital platforms - we want to help make these connections and create opportunities, and build the feedback loops necessary.

Down the road, as we build the connections to producers and programs across the system, there will likely be pitches to create longer form stories, collaborate on digital projects, and continue our momentum after the project is complete.

digital NATIVES - FEATURE DOCUMENTARY

Project Overview

One of the most valuable lessons learned from our Coming Home pilot project, is the realization that there is a rich, complicated story that emerges in bringing the community together to talk about media, our individual and shared relationships with our stories, and the opportunities and potential we see today.

In Warm Springs, 2020 was a year of fires - literally and figuratively. Yet, all around us in the most trying of times, individuals and community have come together in positive ways. Often, when we see our stories projected in the media, what we see "above the fold" is the fire. How do we shift this focus, and take ownership of our own narrative?

As a leader in our community media, we work every day to create a meaningful movement towards telling our own stories, creating possibility, and reframing how we look at ourselves. This project is our ambitious take on what could be - in Warm Springs and communities beyond.

This centerpiece documentary film will not only tell the *"who what where and why"* of this initiative, but inspire others to look inward to embrace possibility and build their own opportunities from the inside out.

Gathering Foundational Content

Built in throughout the in-person events outlined in this proposal, there is an opportunity to gather a wide variety of perspectives.

Filming public events does not make for great content or great conversations. However, we will have our documentary filmmaking partners on-site to take part in the conversations, and select individuals to further interview.

Following an in-person event, while the context of the conversation is fresh in mind, we will engage select individuals in a deeper conversation. This material will build a foundation for the documentary, and the larger project, as well as give us a range of different voices speaking to a slate of related issues, in a consistent production style and quality.

In addition, we will use these interviews as opportunities to recruit participants for our training events, solicit story ideas for our digital series, and deepen connections to the overall work we hope to achieve.

"digital NATIVE" Digital Productions

As our team of Indigenous storytellers produce their short form content for our digital series, we will document their process. From the formative discussions of what the series should be, to the selection of stories and storytellers - we believe we will create a meaninful narrative thread.

The creation of this content will inform the "who, what and why" of this documentary project, as well as show what is at stake. These producers will be given the opportunity to reflect on the process of creating their work throughout the process. What struggles do they face? What hopes do they have for the story they create, and the movement we hope to spark? What are their fears, hopes, dreams and challenges?

Mentor Reflections

The team of established content producer mentors we will build will play an important part in our documentary - providing context for the media landscape and the ways in which the world has changed in their tenure.

As the world becomes more connected, and the barriers to entry diminish, how can we chart a path to something of real value? What struggles does an urban-based reporter face in connecting to, and telling the stories in rural Indigenous communities? What have the previous generations of Indigenous storytellers learned along the way?

In addition, these individuals will engage with their experience working with us on the project. What have our mentors and mentees learned from one another? What insights into each other have they gleaned? What are the barriers and struggles to a continued dialogue?

An important narrative thread will be from an independent Indigenous "digital pioneer" with a look at how they think about their content, the challenges they face going it alone, and what their hopes are for the work they are creating.

Key Themes

As outlined in our overview of the training aspects of our project, we have already determined a list of key themes that relate to the work we are doing, and all aspects of life for our people. These themes will be at the core of the story we tell:

Scarcity Vs. Opportunity
Many of our people make sacrifices in order to live on a Reservation. For some, this is a conscious choice. For others it is not a question at all, but a simple reality. Creating meaningful career opportunities, retaining high achievers, and supporting those most in-need is a fundamental concern in any rural community.

How does remote work and increasingly affordable high speed internet access change the narrative? Can the post-covid world help us see how to make opportunity in a different light? Can a focus on digital opportunity begin to provide a new path forward for Indigenous communities?

Whether we choose to focus on scarcity or opportunity for ourselves and the broader community is a fundamental question.

Key Themes

Loss & Reclaiming of Culture
The preservation of cultural heritage - language, history, traditional lifeways and food - are well trod documentary soil. Our vision is to grapple with these issues through the broader lens of the project, and what it means to fully marry digital creativity with the existing approaches to addressing this existential threat.

Elders & Youth
In any culture worldwide, there are generation gaps. No matter where you look, the gap between the older generations and Millennials, Generation Z, and other "digital natives" is as big as any in recent memory.

Today the gap between digital realities and traditional ways may seem to be widening the gap. But how can focusing our energies on bringing all ages to the table bring us together?

Characters

Elders & Broader Community
How do those who we bring together to discuss this project feel about the framed discussion of media today, and how we hope to use it as a change agent for community? What tensions arise when we try something different, new or unknown.

The broad view of community reaction we gather early on in the process will be informative to the overall scope of the film we create.

Youth
One of our participants in Coming Home is a young man from Warm Springs, who is working to find a place, career, and future within the community. Having served in the military, a common path for Indigenous youth, he has been pursuing a degree in Journalism at a large state university. This is an archetype we often see - stuck between their past, their dreams and the reality of job opportunities that are available in a rural Indigenous community.

The push and pull of youthful passion and determination, and the insecurity of pursuing a dream that is not always broadly understood or supported. Perhaps it takes longer to complete a degree, or the grades aren't perfect, or they are unsure what career path they can reasonably achieve. This crossroads can become protracted, and provides vital decision points for the individual.

Digital Pioneers
What can we learn from Indigenous journalists and storytellers who have made their way into legacy media, and are forging a path into a digital future? How does that path differ from an up-and-comer with a growing Youtube channel, or a successful freelance photojournalism business?

As we recruit our group of digital mentors, we will look for these stories and select one or more to document both traditional and nontraditional paths to successful storytelling careers. Our focus will be to highlight how the paths to success have changed - sometimes slowly, sometimes all at once.

Characters

Leaders in Arts & Culture
Not every Indigenous community has its own radio station, newspaper or other legacy media outlet. Our work in our pilot project has reinforced the idea that our museums, libraries, and even working artists are a key ally for stations like us, as well as our training audience across the region.

In Warm Springs our museum became engaged with our training and has become inspired to increase its digital content production in the future. This shared momentum is encouraging, and will be vital to developing a pipeline for continued digital training, access to equipment, and projects for our most engaged to help create.

How can we think about the cultural work we are already doing, or aspire to do, through a digital lens? How can supporting digital storytelling in our communities increase our capacities, and reframe our ideas of what is possible?

Neighboring Communities
Our Indigenous communities do not exist in a vacuum. Often our schools, grocery stores, and jobs are located in nearby non-Indigenous rural towns. The questions of how we work together, compete, and co-exist - formally and informally, are an informative part of this story.

Sense of Place
Our Indigenous communities in Oregon are geographically diverse. They range from coast mountains and the Pacific Ocean, snowy Cascades to high plains, plateaus and pines, all the way to sagebrush and desert.

These dramatically different backdrops, and the lifestyles they have helped create, are an important element - and will serve a key role in every storyline we create.

Central Conflict

We believe that most conflicts boil down to a desire to be heard, and to be understood. This project frames the current day world of Indigenous people in Oregon, and the complex lives they lead through this lens. It is a story of using technology and innovation as a solution and path forward in a world of scarcity. Our hope is to use this film as a means to build greater understanding and empathy. We also hope to showcase a concept that can be replicated in other places.

Production Timeline

By building much of our production into our concurrent community convening, training and digital production plan, we believe we will be able to keep production within the 24 month scope of the larger proposed project.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

We believe this opportunity is a natural fit for a collaboration between KWSO, a larger more statewide public media organization, digital-focused outlets like *Indian Country Today*, and public media partners like Vision Maker Media and CPB.

Additionally, it could be a good fit for a University College School of Journalism and Communication - of which Oregon has multiple strong programs. Not only can this type of partnership help us to hone our curriculum, but also provide a conduit for mentors, trainers and other needs we may encounter.

Our partners are about more than funding or project guidance, but also their existing networks, content platforms, and their ability to think beyond the traditional approaches to a project like this in this new moment and media landscape.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

We know that our work must always provide us with measurable results - and that is on the forefront of our mind as we have learned from our pilot project, and designed this proposal. Here we will lay out our plans for how to measure the impact of the work we do, as well as an idea of what our success looks like.

Convening
Our initial convening work will take place remotely, by surveying a large sample of individuals from Indigenous communities around our targeted project area.

We will narrow this initial group using the data we gather in order to select the most engaged participants for in-person convening. In-person convening sessions will not only serve to inform the focus of content and topic areas of the training, types of content we produce, and how our work can best serve the community - but also as a recruitment and marketing tool for the trainings we will host later in the process. Those who are most engaged in these conversations are not always the ones who want to take the next steps - but they are invaluable in helping to identify others who might not otherwise be engaged.

With Coming Home we learned there is value above and beyond the project goals in hosting this type of community conversation, and we hope to be able to replicate that success in an even more intentional and structured manner.

Training
In our initial pilot training, we solicited post mortem written reviews from attendees to gauge the value of the training, the areas of interest, as well as thoughts on how the work could have been more valuable or effective to them.

In future training work, we see a value in both a pre-interview and a survey prior to the training that evaluates participants existing knowledge as well as key areas we would like to impact: feelings on relationships to existing media and coverage of issues facing them and their community, existing knowledge and comfort in content creation, how they value learning more about digital content and production, and topics they would like to see covered.

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Training (cont.)
We feel we can get a better data set by matching these pre and post training evaluation tools. How likely are you to take this work on to a next step? How have your ideas and attitudes on the existing media changed? How will digital storytelling, and integrating this work into your existing life and work, change what you do?

Content Creation & Production
We believe the experience of producing content is, especially for the first time, going to be a watermark for the success of the training aspects of this project. Whether each project we tackle in collaboration with our participants is enjoyable, worthwhile, meaningful or even able to be seen to completion will inform how we approach the next.

A pre and post production period survey can be implemented, to gauge whether we sufficiently prepared and supported our participants. It can help us understand what was learned, what areas may have been overlooked, or how we can improve future productions.

Content Aggregation
The project will have its own website presence, which will explain the usual "who we are, what we do" information. Content aggregation will include soliciting, mapping and curating existing content. The module we will use for this will also be made available to embed in our partners websites, using open source tools.

We will be able to clearly quantify the amount of content posted, pageviews, and other engagement with this aspect of the project using web analytics.

Mentoring
We believe we can create a simple framework for both the mentors and mentees in our project to feedback to the project on how the relationship went, what work they set out to do together, and assess if this aspect of the project was of value to both participants and the larger work we have set out to do.

We will gather a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data on how these relationships function, what we all learn, and the impact of the work we all have done.

Digital Content
Our short form Youtube documentary series we will produce is the core of our content, and we can evaluate its performance through available view counts and associated metrics.

While finding an audience for the content is important, and views do matter, we're also keenly interested in questions we might phrase as "so what?". Did this content address something of importance in the community? Did viewing this content help push a viewer to some action? How did perceptions or knowledge of the subject matter change as a result of this story? We are interested in building ways for us to learn as much as we can about impact.

Broadcast Content
We ultimately see our film product as worthy of a national audience, which can be broadcast through public media platforms nationwide.

PROJECT TIMELINE

We estimate this project to be up to 24 months in total. This will include 6 months for planning, development and implementation, followed by 6 months for training and short form content development, and an additional 12 months of post production and content release.

Short form content will be released on a rolling basis throughout the second year, while we tackle post-production on our feature documentary.

CONCLUSION

KWSO is a small station - certainly the smallest of those involved in the initial *Coming Home* pilot grant projects. We have a limited budget and limited staff, but a large vision for what can be in the future for our people and communities.

We present this proposal humbly, acknowledging that in order for this project to coalesce and be successful we will need a robust group of partners. The team we build will not only help us fund, implement and execute - the will help shape our ideas and the vision for what can be.

Not every moment that matters, or story worth telling in our communities or of our people involves a devastating fire, the failure of a water system infrastructure, or a national event akin to Standing Rock. But, when these moments do arise, it helps to bring our focus to the need to have a stronger network of trained, informed, Indigenous voices.

We need to tell our own stories, to collaborate with Journalists, to expand our idea of what is possible, and to be leaders in the ever expanding digital community.